(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to make demining a cent per cent success?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) As per report received from the State Government of Rajasthan landmines laid during the military mobilisation have claimed 124 victims in the Sriganganagar District of Rajasthan.

(b) Due to mobilisation of the Indian Army since December, 2001, agricultural crops in the border areas have been affected. Prior to handing over fields to the villagers, all efforts are made to ensure that the area is fully demined and safe for use.

(c) Demining operation, is an extremely hazardous and time consuming operation, which is undertaken in a systematic manner by resorting to a combination of manual, mechanical & explosive means and by adopting hundred percent safety precautions.

MiG-23 accidents

1811. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that MiG-23s have higher accident rate than MiG-21s;

(b) if so, whether the accident rate of MiG-23s per 10,000 hours of flying is the highest in the IAF fleet;

(c) the reasons for not phasing out of the ageing MiG-23s by Government; and

(d) whether Government have made any investigation to find out why MiG-23s are prone to accident?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) In some years the accident rate of MiG-23 aircraft has been higher than MiG-21 aircraft.

(b) In some years the accident rate of MiG-23 aircraft has been the highest in the IAF fleet.

(c) A gradual phasing out of the MiG-23 fleet is being carried out

keeping in view factors like technical and calendar life, maintainability and replacement.

(d) All aircraft accidents are always investigated.

Recommendation of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence

1812. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has recommended formulating a pre-audited five years defence budget in order to prevent delays in acquisition of weapons; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Launching of LCA

1813. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister has launched LCA in the first week of May, 2003;

(b) whether the technology demonstration of LCA has also been done;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the target set by the Ministry to produce LCA on large scale in the next five years;

(e) whether the Ministry is thinking of exporting LCA to other countries of the world; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?